to use Mr. Lloyd George's expression—lending one of his countenances' to a Government measure; and all of them holding on to Free Trade, sole remainder of a once ample programme.

Thus was Parliament then, debating, putting questions, droning through the day and sometimes through the night, too, unemployment its main preoccupation as war is now, its monotonous proceedings haunted then by derelict towns and always increasing numbers of unemployed as now by bombs and the rattle of guns.

These proceedings, at length or scantily reported, have not aroused much interest. There has been something ghostly about them, a twilight; they have seemed quite remote, like voices heard across water or from the depths of a wide cavern- 'When the House cheers,' C. F. G. Masterman wrote of the House of Commons after the War, 'the sound is as the falling of autumn leaves; when it laughs it is like the plaintive rippling of a wayside stream/[21] Tumultuous events have all been registered in Parliament, but transmuted there, made to seem insubstantial. Special meetings have been summoned, important statements made, excited shouts and cheers often heard, fine sentiments expressed; but the sound and the fury have signified little—shadow fighting, Prime Minister and Opposition Leader interchangeable, all disputes ending in the same processions through the same lobbies.

Mr. Hore-Belisha compared an all-night sitting of Parliament to an army sleeping with its haversack on its back, and Mr. Churchill remarked that the House was *a recognised addition to the

defences of Great Britain'; but the similarity between troops campaigning and Members of Parliament debating until grey morning finds them drowsy and stale, is not easily apparent, and few there are who sleep more quietly in their beds for the knowledge that Mr. Speaker continues to take his place, and Honourable and Right Honourable Members, theirs.

Authority still resides in Lords and Commons. They must take decisions, they must govern. Nothing can be done without their approval; patronage is theirs to bestow, and the framing

[21] Quoted in C. P. G. *Masterman* by Lucy Masterman.